

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the amendments and remarks herein, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Claims 8-17, 25-34 and 54 are pending for further examination.

First, Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesy of conducting a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to discuss the outstanding rejections and possible amendments to the claims. During the interview, the undersigned explained the invention to the Examiner and discussed the differences between the invention and Ballard. Applicant indicated that the claims would be amended to focus the claims on the distinguishing features discussed with the Examiner. The amendments herein are directed to these features.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. In response, Applicant notes that Applicant simply amended claim 8 from its original form to eliminate the mean-plus-function language and that the features now recited in the claims are fully supported by the specification. Thus, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 8, 11-12, 14, 25, 28-29, 31, 42, 45-46, 48 and 54 have been rejected as being anticipated by Ballard. In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 8, 25, 42 and 54 in a manner that is believed to clearly and patentably distinguish Ballard and the remaining prior art of record. Thus, reconsideration and withdraw of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Specifically, claim 8 has been amended to recite a server operation support apparatus supporting an operation of a server to which a plurality of client computers are connected through a network, said server providing conference services to users of said plurality of client computers and allowing insertion of an advertisement that can be viewed by said plurality of client computers when participating in a conference.

Amended claim 8 requires storage for storing information on advertisements available for insertion to said server, an access status detector connected to said network for detecting an access status of said plurality of client computers to said server in connection with said conference, wherein detecting the access status includes determining the number of client computers participating in said conference, and an advertisement designator operably connected to said storage and said access status detector for designating insertion of one of said advertisements to said server according to said information on said advertisements in said storage, when said detected access status satisfies a predetermined condition.

Neither Ballard nor any of the other prior art of record teaches or suggests this particular combination of features. For example, Ballard fails to teach, inter alia, insertion of an advertisement to a server for viewing by a plurality of client computers participating in a conference based on an access status detected for the plurality of client computers, wherein the detected access status includes information on the number of client computers participating in the conference. Thus, for at least these reasons, amended claims 8 is not anticipated by Ballard. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Independent claims 25, 42 and 54 have been amended in a manner that is similar to amended claim 8. Thus, these claims are believed to be allowable for substantially the same reasons set forth above. Moreover, all of the dependent claims are believed to be allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on an allowable independent claim.

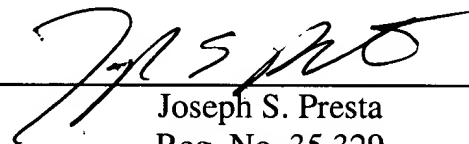
For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection and passage of this case to issuance at an early date are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this case, or deem that any formalities need to be addressed prior to allowance, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the phone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

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